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ABSTRACT

During the late nineteenth century, political rhetoric in some regions of the United States was affected by the philosophy of "populism," based on the belief that government exists to serve all the people, not just special interests. The Populist Party thrived in isolated rural areas, particularly the Dakota territories, at a time when residents were seeking political force to organize for statehood. The party also served as a platform for farmers to express their dissatisfaction with the distant industrial, business, and economic interests that they felt controlled them. Persuasive appeals were based on political and economic discontent, a fear of natural conditions and failure, and the isolated farmers' needs for social interaction. As community centers were established, there were increasing occasions for face-to-face communication. Persuasive dialogues occurred during such meetings as summer encampments and conventions, chautaquas, lyceums, and particularly political rallies. As a reform movement, populism reached its climax in South Dakota in 1896 when the party slate was elected. (RN)

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97. "Building a Populist Impulse"
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99. "So Who Says We Learn Only What We Do!"
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Faculty Lecture at the University of North Dakota
November 15, 1973

THE BUILDING OF A POPULIST IMPULSE

Hazel Heiman

Until recently the term Populism was most often a term with negative connotations. Populism was synonymous with demagogues, frauds, and crackpot politicians. To many Populism was a style of rhetoric.

During the 1960's writers referred to the influence of the nineteenth century Populist philosophy on the late President Lyndon Baines Johnson. In the Making of the President 1964 & 1968 Theadore White referred to the fact that Hubert Humphrey's liberalism was probably shaped by his father who was a member of the Populist Party in South Dakota.[1] In 1968 and in 1969 Newsweek said George Wallace was a Populist who was saying what many of the middle laboring class were thinking and feeling.[2] In 1972 George McGovern was labeled as the prairie Populist. It is interesting that these newsmakers came from areas where Populist feeling was strong 75 to 85 years ago. Some writers and news commentators suggested that McGovern's rhetoric was shaped by the Populist impuse that ran rampant in South Dakota during the 1890's.

While I have seen various statements about what I am going to focus on in my lecture tonight, I do intend to talk about the building of a Populist impulse some eighty years ago that led to a victorious third political party in South Dakota. It could probably happen again in a state or the nation in the 1970's if there were the right ingredients.

For the sake of clarity, there is a need for a definition of the terms that I shall use. By "impulse" I mean an impelling force, a thrust, an impetus, a motivating spirit or drive. "Populism" is a philosophy that implies ordinary men and women believe that the government ought to

serve the people, not just the special interests. "Rhetorical oratory" is the persuasive use of language to influence the thoughts and actions of listeners. I shall take the viewpoint that the Populist Movement in South Dakota was a rhetorical reform movement. In other words there was much oratory. (I shall also note that printed material by the press was important to building the oratory.)

There were many Populist orators in a number of states during the decade between 1886 and 1896, some were logical non-emotional spokesmen while others were radical-rabble-rousers who made headlines in the opposition press and later in the history books. They made the history books because often they were elected to office because their oratory expressed the emotions and the frustrations of the people who voted for them.

While the Populism of the late 19th Century was a national movement, the spirit of Populism was greatest in the Dakotas, particularily South Dakota, in Kansas and Nebraska and in the Carolinas, Georgia and Texas. While there were similar issues in the various states and sections, Populism was also centered around special regional, state, and local concerns. There is no doubt that South Dakota like Kansas was a hotbed of Populism. Kansas had persuaders like Anna Diggs, Senator Jerry "Sockless" Simpson and "Give 'em Hell" Mary Elizabeth Lease. South Dakota had Farmer Henry Loucks, James Kyle, the Congregational minister, who became a United States senator, Alonzo Wardall, the business organizer, and the fiery outspoken Catholic priest, Father Robert Haire. Tonight I am going to explain the why of the movement, what the issues were, and how I believe the Populist impulse was built in South Dakota.

To understand the why of Populism in 1890's we need to look at the social and cultural context of the time. Crude farm dwellings dotted the newly cultivated prairies in the eastern portions of the Territory.

Villages and towns sprang up rapidly every eight to fifteen miles along the newly built railroad lines. Towns had one or two general stores, a hotel and some businesses related to agriculture. There was usually a town hall or opera house. Churches were erected where ever there were sufficient members to form a congregation. As school lands were set aside, each township had at least four country school houses.

Throughout Dakota there was a tendency for people of the same nationality to locate in a particular area. Sometimes a whole community would be settled by friends and relatives. There was a sharing of tasks. Farmers helped each other harvest. This community togetherness existed not only in work but in social activities. Once the school was built, it became the center of community gatherings. The prairie school house was the cite of basket socials, spelling bees, oratorical and declamation contests, lectures, discussion and debates. There was a quest for knowledge so in the 1880's and 90's most communities had literary and debating societies. Information and entertainment was brought to them by means of the chautauqua or lyceum.

The togetherness activities in the social and cultural context was an important factor in building the Populist impulse. The political situation was another "why" factor. Many of the newcomers to the Southern part of Dakota Territory were politically oriented men who became active in the movement for statehood. In the effort to draft a constitution and to achieve a new state government congenial to agriculture, the new settlers came face to face with the Territorial political power structure which was often referred to as the Yankton Ring, who were sent from Washington to rule the Territory. There was a need to ban together to plan a strategy to gain offices at the county and state level. A rhetoric and a platform

were necessary to express political grievances.

One of the major reasons to take collective action and build a Populist Impulse centered around the pioneer's economic plight. Dakota was in a boom period the first half of the decade of the 1880's. The Homestead Act encouraged Easterners to move West and foreigners to go the the New World. In South Dakota there was one class of pioneers who were humble, thrifty and determined to make a home on the Western frontier. They were not interested in so-called worldly things; their life revolved around family, friends, church and community. For these particular people a level of contentment was more easily achieved in simple living. Many of this class were foreign born immigrants.

But there were also the discontented and restless pioneers who came West to find their fortunes without investing too much of themselves, but who saw happiness in material things; these men wanted more than a simple life. To thrive by industry, good management and frugality was not a part of their restless natures. They wanted a sure scheme for profit to achieve their wants and desires. The path to prosperity was filled with obstacles due to unfamiliar soil and weather conditions and they needed a platform or a rhetoric to build blame for failure.

The farmers who came during the "boom era" needed money for land improvement. Machinery for cultivating and seeds for planting the lands required cash. Because many farmers were drawn to Dakota Territory by free and inexpensive lands, they failed to consider actual cost and came without the necessary finances to build and cultivate homesteads. They needed cheap money from lending institutions; they found credit and interest obstacles to finance their venture. They needed elevators for grain storage and terminals for selling the grain and they needed transportation

to move their products to market centers; they found themselves at the mercy of grain monopolies and railroad barons; they needed a rhetoric and a platform to express their dissatisfaction with industry, business and economy.

The period of hope for prosperity was short. Drought, blizzards, and depressed markets ended homesteader's dreams. Those who came to find a golden future faced disappointment, poverty, and bankruptcy. There was a cause and they needed a populist impulse to express their frustrations and despair.

These ingredients, then, for a Populist impulse existed (1) political and economic discontent, (2) fear of the natural conditions and failure (3) loneliness and a lack of excitement and entertainment and a quest for knowledge and (4) the existence of community gathering places where they could verbalize their fears and frustrations, state problems and devise solutions.

Next I need to review the issues as they were developed in the Populist impulse. Some of the national third party issues centered on a free ballot and fair count, graduate income tax, restriction of immigration, curtailing unfair labor practices, abolition of national banks, foreclosures of mortgages that the government held on railroads and a doctrine of equal rights for all and special privileges for none. South Dakota adapted the national issues to their needs.

An underlying theme of the rhetoric which encompassed the issues was the conviction that America had to return to the basic social order of the founders and reestablish justice and individual rights for all men. They presented their ideology in their motto, "Under the spirit of love and justice we rule and govern." From 1890 through 1896 there was some change in their

lines of argument. The argument seemed to move from the general to the more specific.

In 1890 they chose seven basic lines of argument which attacked what they believed to be evil. First they attacked the banks and tight money and high interest rates. This evil could be eliminated by full and legal tender of currency to be issued by the general government directly to productive industries without the intervention of the banks. In today's language they called for direct government subsidy. The second argument was against the railroad officials and they proposed that justice be established by government ownership and operation of railroads. The third line of argument centered around a shortage of currency. With unlimited coinage of silver this evil was to disappear. And fourth to curtail political coersion and election frauds, they claimed that honest government could be achieved through a secret system of voting. And five, they were fearful of state government going into debt, and advocated a dignified and rigid economy. In order to protect Dakota lands and to keep cheap land available, they proposed establishing laws prohibiting alien ownership of lands by foreign syndicates or excessive holdings by corporations. And finally in 1890 they wanted cheaper materials so they argued against a protective tariff and suggested that there be no tariff on necessities and raw materials; a high tax on luxuries as a means of raising revenue. In 1890 and as in each political year they pledged their support to the national third party platform.

In 1892 the interests and concerns of the South Dakota rhetoric makers were reflected around these issues: (1) asking for referendum and initiative, (2) opposing further sale of school lands, (3) favoring assessment of mortgages to the holders and exempting assessment to the mortgagee, (4) they argued for legislation to protect mining, railway and manufacturing

employees from careless accidents, (5) they proposed reducing the interest rate on loans to eight per cent maximum, (6) they condemned the use of private-armed marchers such as the "Pinkertons" by the plutocracy. (This argument was a result of some labor problems in the Black Hills.) (7) they advocated curtailing discrimination against war veterans.

In 1894 the Populist Impulse was centered on these major contentions: (1) that the state government should dispose of no more coal lands and that mines should be operated by the state in the interests of the people, (2) that state educational institutions should be divorced from partisan politics, (3) that liquor traffic should be nationalized, (4) that a pension should be established for all those soldiers and sailors who had actively served in the Civil War, with disability benefits and widows' pension and, (5) that the state government be condemned for mismanagement and mal-administration which led to an unconstitutional tax levy.

By 1896 a big issue battle took place between the original impulse builders and the converts. The recent converts wanted to follow the national trend and settle for one major issue--silver versus gold. Loucks, the main impulse builder was opposed to a one issue campaign and said:

> "We have had much advice of late looking towards reducing the number of our demands to one. I am utterly opposed to the elimination of a single demand. To make a contest on the one plank 'free coinage of silver' would be entirely too narrow for a progressive organization."[3]

Loucks believed that the new party could not risk all of their ideals on one major issue. He and his followers managed to maintain a position for the Peoples Party of South Dakota that proposed that (1) the government should reclaim land from aliens and corporations, (2) that the telegraph and telephone system become a part of the postal system, (3) that the federal government should provide postal savings banks, (4) that tariff

laws be under a non-partisan board; (5) that the election of United States senators be by direct vote of the people;,(6) that there be annihilation of pernicious lobbying; (7) that initiative and referendum be adopted; (8) that homesteads be granted on Indian reservations; (9) that the corruption and fraudulent practices of the state administration be condemned. (10) that a genuine Monroe doctrine be effected with no domination or interference from foreign countries, and (11) free and unlimited coinage of silver 16 to 1. This statement accompanied the last contention, "We firmly believe that the American flag and the American dollar should be one and inseparable. That whatever commodity whether of gold, silver or paper bears the impression of the sovereign power of this nation and should be good enough for any citizen."

As the Populist rhetoric was worked out at a local and state level, various personnel helped to shape and modify the persuasion until it assumed its characteristic form--a local persuasion shaped and modified within a general framework. The next question, how was the impulse built out of the general framework?

Important but difficult to set apart from the actual Populist Impulse building was the rhetoric centered around the move for statehood and the rhetoric in the development of farmer organizations.

Before 1890 a case had been built against "the monopolist and plutocratic conspirators who were 'milking the farmer of his profits,'" the elevator conspiracy that "unfairly graded grain to reduce the farmer's profit," and the railroad barons whose rates were unreasonable.

During the 1880's several important lessons were learned in the fight for statehood. First the farmers found that they could organize clubs and alliances and be an important political force. Second there

was an opportunity to observe the power of the press. The Statehood League had printed and distributed thousands of tracts and pamphlets in several languages. And third, school houses were used as adult education centers to acquaint people with the issues the constitution committee faced and with the process of voting for statehood.

The Farmers Alliance of the 1880's which was organized to verbalize the farmer's plight and to build empathy for the political cause of the common man was a ready organization for Populist literature which was available to them for study and for use in discussions and debates. In the 1890's Alliance meetings became rallying places for the Populist impulse and aroused emotions, caused commitment and satisfied the need for people to have contact, participation and exciting argument. In stating their concerns in common language around common principles they were shaping a Populist doctrine. They needed more teachers and preachers of the doctrine and so the next step in building the Populist Impulse was an education program.

The use of newspapers and tracts as well as inexpensive paperback books was a major channel to persuade the farmer and farmer-businessman. By 1892 there was a statewide network of official reform papers. The Dakota Ruralist was the official state reform paper, but it was the goal of the Reform Press Association to have a reform newspaper in every county. The Association worked out special offers with Alliance and reform publishers from other states and with the National Alliances for their newspapers and for papers in several foreign languages to reach the foreign born citizens. Alliance libraries and reading rooms could be found in most of the towns. In the rural areas reading materials were kept in the schools or at spokesman's home. Newspapers, tracts and books could be read by anyone

interested in knowing the facts about the economic and political plight that affected them. Programs and proposals of reform could be studied and discussed and argued.

Printed material was an excellent avenue for pondering and contemplating the arguments and the persuasive strategies, but the press was not a substitute for the power of social cooperation and the presence of dynamic and exciting speakers. Many were eager to get dressed, hitch up the wagon to attend a rally to break the humdrum routine of the farm.

In the final analysis in South Dakota the face-to-face communication situations provided the main avenue for Populist persuasion which was to educate, agitate and reform. The group setting was important in the training program for leaders and in expanding a network of teaching groups that trained more people to teach and preach the gospel of Populism.

Face-to-face communication was carried out in two basic contexts: the persuasive context controlled by the Populists, and the utilization of existing contexts. By context I mean the assembling of a group of people in a certain place, at a certain time for a particular purpose and/or occasion.

The most familiar of the Populist controlled contexts was gatherings of people of like-persuasion at local weekly, semi-monthly or monthly Alliance meetings, and at special institutes, at encampments and conventions. People would be brought together, programs of an inspirational and educational nature were arranged with the objective that those assembled converts would go out to convert others for the cause of Populism.

There was some disagreement as to the type of organization an Alliance should be. Some wanted secret societies with recommended and approved membership and a ritual for initiation of members, while other Alliances wanted open meetings and advertised that anyone was invited to attend and

help along with the work. The programs of the Alliances varied but most often they centered around speeches on free coinage of silver, taxation, interest on mortgages, needed legislation to control railroads, the evils of Wall Street and legislation to halt monopolies. Often there were debates on the virtues of farming and governmental interference with agriculture. Debates were actual four man debates, judged by a panel of judges who declared a winner. A Populist Speakers' Bureau provided a list of trained traveling Alliance speakers who were available to speak and to teach.

The Populist Institutes were initiated as winter educational programs to spread Populist propaganda and to lay the ground work for the fall political campaigns. Two or three day institutes were planned for every county Alliance, or if there was not a county organization, they planned joint efforts of the local alliances within an area of several counties. During part of the institute there was an opening meeting to which business and professional men as well as the opposition were invited. These institutes were planned so that members of the state executive committee could be in attendance.

Week-long encampments and conventions were held jointly each year at a designated time and place. The business convention was held during the afternoon and the evening was spent listening to Populist speakers. An example of such a gathering happened at Redfield--June 20th through the 27th, 1892. The convention opened Monday evening with an address on the referendum by a Reverend Kaufman. The business meeting began noon Tuesday. State leaders spoke at the Tuesday evening session. Wednesday afternoon the convention continued and Wednesday evening state leaders again spoke. Thursday was Weaver's Day. General J. B. Weaver of Iowa spoke at

both a 2:30 and a 7:30 meeting. Friday was Jerry Simpson's Day and Saturday was Mary Elizabeth Lease's Day. Each of these Kansas speakers spoke at 2:30 and again at 7:30. The 10:30 Sunday address was by Mrs. A. Cranmer and the exercises were in the charge of the W.C.T.U. Monday was a grand round-up with speeches by the candidates and ended with an evening address by Senator James Kyle.

All of the state's reform groups were encouraged to meet at the same time and location and invited to attend the late afternoon meetings and the evening meetings. Some of the other reform groups who did meet separately for their business meetings but jointly with the Populist reformers for their inspirational-educational meetings were the Women's Sufferage group, Knights of Labor, Western Cattleman's Association and the Diary Farmers. Those in attendance went back to their home communities to continue the education of the Populists.

The reformers were quick to recognize that many people could be exposed to the Populist impulse at formal and informal gatherings outside of Alliance control. It was the utilization of the existing local organizations and gatherings outside of the Alliance that exposed Populism to the committed, non-committed and the indifferent and got coverage in newspapers other than the reform press.

The chautauqua, popular at that time, provided a platform for declaiming the goals of Populism in many communities. Summer chautauqua programs were an exposure to culture and to viewpoints on issues and a source to broaden interests. The programs included drama, readings, and miscellaneous entertainment but centered attention around speakers and lecturers who discussed social, economic and political questions of the day. On the national and state scene the Populists as often as possible worked to put their reform speakers on the Chautauqua program. The leaders

of the movement realized that putting their persuaders on the program enhanced the reform movement's prestige. The chautauqua was described as molding the political thought of the Midwest. Doris Louise Black's History of Grant County gives this description of a summer chautauqua located at Big Stone City.

> People came to the Chautauqua from miles around; from far beyond the boundaries of Grant County. The session was from ten days to two weeks. The old and young, decrepit and healthy, women and men, in Sunday regalia or in shirt sleeves--they came.[4]

Probably the best known chautauqua in Eastern South Dakota was located at Lake Madison. There was a hotel, a pavilion and a few other buildings and a mass of tents to form the atmosphere of a vacationing area. This site attracted mainly the upper-class socially and the upper level business and professional men and their families, and they were not necessarily sympathic to the common man's cause. Having a Populist on their program caused a stir and agitation. The following incident tells of their reaction. Ignatius Donnelly was a popular lecturer who was also a spokesman of the reform movement. Donnelly was scheduled to give one of his famous lectures entitled "Wit and Humor." Instead of this lecture he gave a third party speech and the audience reacted with hostility. They labeled him a proponet of a "calamity doctrine." When the press covered such speeches they labeled the reformers as radical hot heads and there would often be a cartoon to show that actually so-called calamity speakers were out to use those to whom they were speaking with their wild-eyed schemes and non-logical solutions. Never-the-less the speaker caused discussion among the vacationers and they went home to tell their communities.

Lyceum programs during the winter replaced the cultural and educational achievement of the summer chautauqua. For the isolated communities the

national lyceum like the chautauqua provided a link with the outside world. All of the larger towns and some of the smaller ones had an opera house which housed lyceum programs that took place in the afternoon and evening. Those communities without an opera house used the town hall. There were local lyceum clubs, Shakespeare clubs, or literary and debating societies which featured local talent and these groups met in school houses or in homes. Ladies aids of churches were an important teaching, information and entertainment center and the ladies planned meetings around circuit speakers and then invited husbands. Susan B. Anthony, Sara Emery, and Mary Elizabeth Lease were popular women reform speakers and Ignatius Donnelly, Hamlin Garlan and William Jennings Bryan were frequent men speakers on winter lyceum circuits.

Another way for a Populist to spread the doctrine was to find his way to a non-populist platform at the school house or home during a social gathering. While the women were having a sewing bee the men were listening to a neighbor Populist. This description from Brule county (Brule county is the county in which Chamerblain is located and Chamberlain is located on the Missouri River) was probably typical.

> The young men would hitch up a team to the old lumber wagon and drive around for a load being careful that room was left in the spacious front seat for the driver's best girl. The school house was generally filled and the program was very interesting.[5]

A Fourth of July celebration was a time for fun, games, fireworks and orations and the Populist reformers made use of this context. Old Settler's Picnics brought friends and relatives together in someones grove of trees or at riverside picnic areas. This kind of reunion or celebration called for a speech. So from a hurriedly erected platform such as a wagon the reform doctrine was spoken.

A fair was another event which drew large crowds and the Populists made use of the opportunity to reach more of the uncommitted. They participated in the parade, provided speakers for fair programs and passed out Populist literature.

The climax of the seasonal impulse building came with the political rallies. While local Alliance clubs, county institutes and state encampments and conventions were necessary to indoctrinate and unify the committed and while lecturers and orators reached the non-committed and the indifferent by using the chautauqua and lyceum, as well as the Fourth of July and picnic platforms, the remaining task was that of winning the political elections.

State political party conventions were held in June and in July counties prepared slates of candidates for office and in August the campaign committees were selected and strategy was planned. The Populist campaign ran under the banner of an Independent Party and then under the banner of the People's Party. Political ferver was building during September and October to climax in November. The planners and candidates were hopeful that the climatic peak of victory would be achieved on election day.

There were three principle types of political rallies, the county rally which often met on the court house square, the school house rally and the big grand rally. At the county rallies selected speakers addressed their audiences on the planks of the adopted platform and discussed the issues pertinent to that particular audience. The picnic and barbecue were distinctive features of Populist county rallies. To bring out the reform issues the Populists were eager to challenge the opposition. The following typical advertisement appeared in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader, September 22, 1894.

> To the Republican candidates and their supporters:
> On behalf of the candidates running for legislature on the Independent ticket we hereby challenge the Republican candidates to a series of joint debates on the issues of the campaign, such debates to be held at any point in the county and to cover as many dates as our opponents wish.[6]

The debates took place on the county platform but the counter-rhetoric was provided by the opposition press and this provided additional fuel for campaigning. Regardless of whether or not the debaters appeared on the same platform at the same time, debates were carried on. When the weather became unfavorable for outdoor speaking, school houses became familiar settings. To attract people there needed to be a program which usually featured music and reading of poetry, or literature by local talent. Once the people gathered the attention was soon turned to political issues and to candidates.

More spectacular was the bonfire rally. Tires and other combustibles were heaped on a pile at a spot such as a central street intersection where people would congregate. A speaker's platform was erected near the bonfire and while the fire blazed men took turns giving short speeches.

H. J. Dunham, who wrote the history of Jerauld County stated that in 1894 and 1896 politics was an "epidemic". The use of community halls and community school houses and street corners probably helped to cause the political epidemic.

The Political Grand Rally was used to feature candidates for state and national offices. The Populists utilized a number of devices to drum up crowds and to create a persuasive climate for speakers. The programs for these rallies usually featured comments by the local chairman, music by a band or chorus and a speech by the notable candidate. Sometimes to develop empathy, unity and cohesion there was group singing of Populist songs.

Other times rallies would be proceeded by a parade through town or a torchlight march. When a national figure was campaigning for the cause or for an office, an all-out effort was made to organize a large torchlight parade. To advertize the rallies huge posters in gay colors were put on sides of buildings throughout the area and special trains with cut rates helped to build the crowd and create excitement. These grand rallies usually took place within a time frame of a week or ten days and were planned for the population centers and the rally's political cast would go by train from one place to the next and the publicity of appearances seemed to build a momentum so that the final rallies brought thousands from all over.

Political rallies were a device to polarize the voters. If there was a parade it was made up of horse drawn wagons providing transportation for the entire family, bands, flags, transparencies and horseback riders on frisky ponies, men carrying oil burning torches all of which created an excitement, curiosity and enthusiasm for the on-lookers and many would be drawn into the activities and some would follow the parade to the platform. Then the committed to the reform movement went before the audiences. There were many committed audience members, but the approach was intended to involve the indifferent and non-committed by getting them caught in the fever of celebration. The speeches were often more emotional than logical and were so in an effort to stir the political waters. By speaking before every possible assembly of people the non-committed were often agitated by what they heard and the opposition was agitated to fight back and their reaction lead to the counter rhetoric which kept the political fires blazing. It was counter rhetoric coupled with lines of persuasive strategy that included facts and logic that hopefully would cause reverberations in the indifferent and would cause them to fall into the Populist camp.

Because the last phase of persuasion process was to convert, it was planned to appeal to the emotions. The activity of the rally was purposely spectacular and sentimental; the speeches included facts and logic topped with sensuous language and illustrations to create an atmosphere of emotionalism to catch up the majority in the wave of motivating spiritualism called Populism. Populism was like a religious revival for in it there was to be a road that led to the truth and the way. It was the doctrine of change.

So why do I label Populism as an impulse in South Dakota? Because it was a spiritual doctrine of reform to build a better society. For there to be a reform movement there must be an abuse or injustice to stimulate efforts. Between 1886 and 1896 the economic grievances revolved around problems caused by recent immigration and the task of building a home and making a living within a community located in a desolate lonely area with a climate of unfamiliar extremes during a period when general economic conditions included high cost of production, with low yields, depressed prices and markets, and little available money from banks. The political grievances related to statehood and the desire of a state government free from the unjust and abusive evils of Territorial government.

For some Dakotans the political, social and economic conditions were so unbearable that they left while others remained and their hope was in reform. They believed that reform was needed not only on the local and state level but on the national level. The question was how to bring about reform. They needed an organization through which change could be advocated. The most available organization was the Farmer's Alliance which also drew the largest and widespread representation.

A reform movement needs individuals with structural and administrative ability to plan and to administer the reform efforts. The main reform

leader was Henry Loucks. It was his activity that gave the reform movement a connection with the outside arena. He was an active organizer on the national level and had connections with other reform leaders outside of the state. In South Dakota he was the main writer, teacher and preacher of the Populist doctrine. Although he was aided and supported by many area county leaders, he was still the central figure. The leaders of the movement became the political proponents who supplied the facts and developed the ideas along chosen lines of argument both logical and non-logical. They designed strategies to convert, to mobolize opinion, to unify the followers.

Within the conversion process there was the need to gather and educate the curious and bewildered in local clubs, county institutes and state wide conventions and encampments. The next step was to activate the educated into the speaking of the impulse from every possible platform. And finally it was important to gather up voters and lead them to the ballot box for it was favorable ballot box results that would effectuate reform.

The persuasive techniques used by the reformer spokesman in the various contexts created a strong impulse. As N. J. Dunham of Jerauld County said:

> In 1896 interest in politics became intense. Every-man was a politician....People gathered on the street corners and sidewalks in twos, threes, and dozens and asserted or denied many things about which they knew little. It was talked in the stores and shops, in churches and homes, by the roadside and in the fields.[7]

November 1896 saw Populism reached its climax in South Dakota. The People's Party slate was elected to govern and to reform.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Theadore White, The Making of the President, 1964, pp. 309-313. The Making of the President, 1968, pp. 401-402.

[2]"The Troubled American; A Special Report on the White Majority, Newsweek, October 6, 1969, pp. 20-36. "Wallace and His Folks", Newsweek, September 16, 1968, pp. 25-28.

[3]From a speech given at the National Farmers' Alliances and Industrial Union at Topeka, Kansas, February 6, 1895.

[4]Doris Louise Black, "History of Grant County, South Dakota--1861-1937" (M.A. Thesis, University of Colorado, 1938) and published by Milbank Herald Advance, Milbank, South Dakota, 1939.

[5]South Dakota Historical Collections, Volume XXIII, p. 114.

[6]Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, S.D., September 22, 1894.

[7]H. J. Dunham, A History of Jerauld County, South Dakota (Wessington Springs, South Dakota, 1910), p. 247.